

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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SUBJECT: PRD SELECTS ANTONIO GUZMAN AS ITS PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE

1. MAJOR OPPOSITION DOMINICAN REVOLUTIONARY PARTY (PRD) TODAY NOMINATED SILVESTRE ANTONIO GUZMAN FERNANDEZ AS ITS PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE AND JACOBO MAJLUTA FOR VICE PRESIDENT FOR 16 MAY 78 NATIONAL ELECTION. DECISION CAME IN EARLY MORNING VOTING WHICH ENDED PARTY'S NINTH NATIONAL CONVENTION HELD HERE THIS WEEKEND.

2. GUZMAN, WHO TURNS 66 THIS WEEK, IS A SANTIAGO CATTLE AND COFFEE GROWER WHO RAN WITH JUAN BOSCH AS HIS VICE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE IN THE UNSUCCESSFUL EFFORT AGAINST JOAQUIN BALAGUER IN 1966. IN 1974 HE WAS PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE OF THE PRD-LED "SANTIAGO ACCORD", A GROUP OF OPPOSITION PARTIES WHICH CHALLENGED BALAGUER IN 1974. GUZMAN AND OTHER PARTIES DROPPED OUT OF THAT ELECTION TWO DAYS PRIOR TO THE VOTE, CLAIMING THAT CONDITIONS DID NOT EXIST FOR FREE AND HONEST CONTEST.

3. GUZMAN IS RESPECTED IN PARTY AS DECENT AND HONEST AND HAS, DURING LONG HOT PRIMARY BATTLE, BEEN CONSIDERED FAVORITE TO WIN TOP SPOT FOR HIS LONG YEARS OF SERVICE TO PARTY, WHICH PRODUCED WIDESPREAD GRASSROOTS SUPPORT. BIOS OF GUZMAN AND MAJLUTA FOLLOW

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BY SEPTEL.

4. GUZMAN DEFEATED SALVADOR JORGE BLANCO IN A SECOND ROUND OF VOTING, 231 DELEGATE VOTES TO 172. JORGE, A DISTINGUISHED SANTIAGO ATTORNEY AND ALWAYS CONSIDERED THE UNDERDOG, LAUNCHED HIS CAMPAIGN THIS SUMMER FROM A POSITION OF RELATIVE OBSCURITY IN THE PARTY. HE SUCCEEDED IN ESTABLISHING STRONG CREDENTIALS THROUGH THE

PRD'S IMPROVISED "PRIMARY CAMPAIGN" IN WHICH HE, GUZMAN, MAJLUTA AND THREE MINOR PARTY FIGURES WAGED AN INTENSE CONTEST AROUND THE COUNTRY FOR GRASSROOTS SUPPORT. JORGE W HO RAN ON A CAMPAIGN OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND MODERATION WAS CONSIDERED THE PARTY'S MOST ATTRACTIVE CANDIDATE IN IMPORTANT SECTORS OUTSIDE THE PARTY. HIS APPEAL REACHED TO THE BUSINESS-INDUSTRIAL ELITE, THE CHURCH, AND EVEN SOMEWHAT TO MILITARY AND OFFICIAL CIRCLES.

5. NOMINATION OF GUZMAN WAS A CLIFF-HANGER DUE TO RUMORS PERSISTING UP TO LAST MINUTE THAT IF HE FAILED TO GET PARTY NOMINATION ON FIRST BALLOT, JORGE AND MAJLUTA WOULD JOIN FORCES WHICH COULD THEN NOMINATE A WINNING PRESIDENTIAL-VICE PRESIDENTIAL TICKET. HOWEVER, AFTE FIRST BALLOT (GUZMAN 203, JORGE 116, MAJLUTA 108), MAJLUTA WITHDREW, FREEING HIS DELEGATES TO VOTE THEIR PREFERENCES ON THE SECONF VOTE. ENOUGH OF THESE WENT TO GUZMAN TO PUT HIM OVER THE TOP (A SIMPLE MAJORITY).

6. ALTHOUGH THERE HAVE BEEN SUGGESTIONS THAT A DEAL WAS STRUCK BETWEEN GUZMAN AND MAJLUTA, ONE RELIABLE NEWSPAPER SOURCE, WHO FOLLOWED THE ENTIRE VOTING, TOLD EMBOFF THERE WERE STRONG PRESSURES ON MAJLUTA, WHO IS ALSO THE PARTY PRESIDENT, TO AVOID TAKING A STEP WHICH COULD HAVE BADLY DIVIDED THE PARTY THROUGH SELECTION OF JORGE, A MINORITY CANDIDATE.

7. DESPITE INTENSE PRE-CAMPAIGN ACTIVITY OF THE MAJOR CANDIDATES WHICH BROUGHT SOME HEATED CONFRONTATIONS BETWEEN FOLLOWERS AT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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LOCAL CONVENTIONS WHICH NOMINATED DELEGATES TO THE NATIONAL PARTY CONVENTION, EVENT TOOK PLACE IN AN ATMOSPHERE OF ORDERLY CLAM, WITH STRICT OBSERVANCE OF DEMOCRATIC AND PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURES. MAJOR SPEECHES AND FIRST BALLOTTING WERE TELEVISED IN EARLY VIEWING HOURS. FOLLOWING GUZMAN'S NOMINATION, JORGE MADE A SPEECH SUPPORTING THE PARTY'S CHOICE AND URGING UNITY FOR NEXT MAY'S ELECTIONS.
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